

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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SUBJECT: AMSPEC LEO MAYER IN BARBADOS

THE AMERICAN EMBASSY'S BICENTENNIAL YEAR PROGRAM GOT UNDERWAY
ON JANUARY 26 WITH A VISIT TO BARBADOS BY AMERICAN AGRICULTU-
RAL ECONOMIST, DR. LEO MAYER.

DR. MAYER, A SENIOR RESEARCHER ATTACHED TO THE LIBRARY OF CON-
GRESS IN WASHINGTON D.C., IS ON A TWO WEEK LECTURE TOUR OF
FOUR CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES, SPONSORED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT.
BEFORE DR. MAYER GAVE HIS TWO LECTURES, HE WAS TAKEN ON AN
EXTENSIVE TOUR OF THE 166 SQUARE MILE ISLAND TO LOOK AT THE
VARIOUS PROJECTS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRI-
CULTURE.

HE SAW LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION (CATTLE, IGS, POULTRY, SHEEP
AND GOATS) AT THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED PINE PLANTATION; ANALYSIS
AT WORK AT THE VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY; THE AGRICUL-
TURAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE BARBA-
DIANS TO EAT MORE LOCAL FOODS; AND WAS DEEPLY IMPRESSED WITH
A UNIQUE PILOT PROJECT IN WHICH THE PITH OF SUGARCANE IS USED
AS A BASE FOR ANIMAL FEEDS.

DR. MAYER TOOK A KEEN INTEREST IN AN EXTENSIVE CIVIL ENGIN-
EERING PROJECT, KNOWN AS THE SOIL CONSERVATION SCHEME, IN
THE NORTHERN SECTION OF THE ISLAND. THERE, THE MINISTRY OF
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AGRICULTURE HAS BEEN AT WORK SINCE 1956 DESPERATELY TRYING

AND SUCCEEDING IN SAVING MUCH-NEEDED AGRICULTURAL LAND FROM EROSION INTO THE SEA.

THE VISITING SPECIALIST COMPLIMENTED THE GOVERNMENT ON ITS FOOD DIVERSIFICATION PROGRAM IN THE PLANTING OF CROPS OTHER THAN SUGAR. THEY INCLUDE: POTATOES, YAMS, EDDOES, AVOCADOES, GRAPES AND A WIDE RANGE OF CITRUS FRUITS.

A SIZEABLE TURN-OUT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND AGRICULTURISTS HEARD DR. MAYER'S FIRST TALK AND LATER ENGAGED HIM IN LIVELY AND INTERESTING DISCUSSION ON THE WORLD FOOD PROBLEM AND ITS EFFECT ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES LIKE BARBADOS.

THE KANSAS BORN ECONOMIST NOTED THAT EVERY NATION, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, HAD A VITAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE WORLD FOOD SITUATION. HE STRESSED THE URGENT NEED FOR INTELLIGENT GOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS FOR FACING UP TO THE PROBLEMS OF INADEQUATE SUPPLY OF FOOD.

THE FOLLOWING DAY, IN THE PRESENCE OF A SMALL BUT ATTENTIVE GATHERING OF LOCAL PLANTERS, DR. MAYER PINPOINTED THE CARIBBEAN PROBLEM AS THE DILEMMA OF STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN THE PROVISION OF AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF FOOD FOR ITS PEOPLE AND OTHER PRESSING PRIORITIES LIKE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELFARE.

DR. MAYER LEFT A VERY FAVOURABLE IMPRESSION AMONG DECISION-MAKERS. HE WAS INTRODUCED BY THE DEPUTY CHIEF AGRICULTURAL OFFICER TO HIS COLLEAGUES AS "A MAN WHO KNOWS WHAT HE IS TALKING ABOUT."

HIS IDEAS WERE AVIDLY RECEIVED BY ALL WHO TURNED UP TO HEAR HIS LECTURES. AT THE END OF HIS FINAL TALK, THE MAN IN CHARGE OF BARBADOS' DIVERSIFICATION FOOD PROGRAM, MR. ED CUMBERBATCH, ARRIVED AFTER BEING DELAYED AT A PREVIOUS FUNCTION. DR. MAYER PATIENTLY SAT DOWN WITH HIM AND WENT OVER, IN DETAIL, ALL THE POINTS HE HAD RAISED IN THE LECTURE, WHILE MR. CUMBERBATCH TOOK NOTES.

ANOTHER MEMORABLE ASPECT OF DR. MAYER'S VISIT WAS HIS ALMOST IMMEDIATE GRASP OF BARBADOS' PECULIAR AGRICULTURAL

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PROBLEMS AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO OFFER SUGGESTIONS. THE PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA GAVE WIDE COVERAGE TO THE TWO-DAY VISIT, AND HIGH PRAISE WAS SHOWERED ON THE AMERICAN EMBASSY FOR ARRANGING THE VISIT.

POST'S OWN IMPRESSION OF THIS AMSEPC IS THAT HE IS A HIGHLY ARTICULATE COMMUNICATOR, WHOSE AMIABLE AND APPROACHABLE MANNER ENDEARS HIM TO ALL WITH WHOM HE COMES INTO CONTACT,

FROM POLITICIANS TO PLANTERS.

DR. MAYER REPRESENTS THAT SEARCHING BREED OF "GET -OUT-THERE-
AND-SEE-FOR-MYSELF" SPECIALIST WHO ARE NOT CONTENT WITH
ESPOUSING UNTRIED THEORIES FROM BEHIND VINYL-TOPPED DESKS
IN AIR-CONDITIONED OFFICES.

DR. MAYER'S VISIT IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED. POSTS EAGERLY
LOOKS FORWARD TO ARRIVAL OF AMSPECS JUDGE THOMPSON AND
DR. EVANS LATE IN THE YEAR.
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